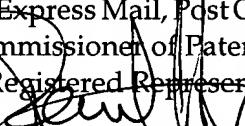


ABSTRACT

A distributed processing, interactive computer network and method of its operation is described. The network is designed to provide very large numbers of simultaneous users access to large numbers of applications which feature interactive text/ graphic sessions and advertising targeted to users. The network includes one or more host computers including computing resources capable of communicating with one and another. Additionally, the network includes a plurality of reception system computers capable of communicating with the host computers, the reception system computers being arranged so that users can request interactive applications and advertising at their respective reception systems. The method for operating the network includes steps for generating the interactive text/ graphic sessions of at least some applications and advertising from information that include data and/or program instructions. Additionally, the method features steps for distributing information in the network computers, and, thereafter, permitting the reception system computer at which an application and/or advertising are requested to selectively collect the information required for the application and/or advertising from the network and the respective reception system so that the requested application and/or advertising may be presented at the reception system based on the information collected. In accordance with the method, when a request for application and/or advertising are entered at a reception system, if information for the application is unavailable from the reception system, the information is requested from a first host and to the extent requested information is unavailable or not preferably provided from the first host, the information can be obtained from other hosts of the network and, thereafter, supplied to the reception systems requesting the information. Further, the network includes computing resources at one or more hosts that produce, store, process and disseminate data concerning applications and advertising that permits advertising to be targeted to users based user reaction to applications and advertising, as well other user specific data such as demographics and local.

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